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TF White Devil provides security for election rallies



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

A Task Force White Devil paratrooper stands guard June 5, at the village of Yaqubi as Khowst provincial governor Mera Juddin Pathan made a speech to villagers. Pathan spoke to encourage participation in September's parliamentary elections.

By Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

YAQUBI, Afghanistan—Villagers from Yaqubi gathered near the town's mosque June 5, to listen to a speech given by Mera Juddin Pathan, Khowst provincial governor, speak about the importance of taking part in Afghanistan's political process as September's parliamentary election nears.

With Afghan police officers, Afghan National Army Soldiers, Paratroopers from 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, AH-64 Apache helicopters and A-10

Warthog bombers all providing security to the event, the governor made sure that his message was clear to not only the Afghans he spoke to, but to those who would wish to intimidate Afghans and disrupt the election process.

The village of Yaqubi although only about 15 kilometers from the provincial capital, Khowst, seems much more remote due to the rough, undeveloped mountain roads that lead to it.

With the crowd of Afghans ranging from old to young, Pathan expressed his concerns for tribal loyalties interfering with the villagers from voting for the best can-

didate for their province and Afghanistan as a whole.

"We should not let tribal loyalties get in the way of selecting good, educated people to the parliament," Pathan said. "There are many smart, educated men, but we should vote for the right ones who want to build the country."

Although he singled out no particular candidate, Pathan expressed his concern that the right kind of person would look out for orphans and widows.

"This person should have the idea of the whole society in his mind, not filling his own pocket," Pathan said.

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June 19, 2005

Army Birthday: 230 years of standards

By Michael Schellhammer

This early summer is the 230th anniversary of when American Colonists and British soldiers clashed outside Boston and began the American Revolution in 1775. On June 14 that same year the Continental Congress officially recognized the armed New England farmers and militiamen that had spontaneously gathered at Cambridge, Mass., as a Continental Army and named George Washington its commander.

On this day every year, soldiers around the world commemorate June 14 as the birthday of the U.S. Army, and remember when Gen. Washington established its standards of honor, discipline and professionalism. These traits have carried the Army through the Revolution, all of America's wars since, and continue today.

The Americans at Cambridge mustered more than 20,000 militiamen from all over New England, Pennsylvania and New York, but they were an army in name only. Fiercely independent, unruly, and often intoxicated Yankees made up the militia companies, and military control was so loose Washington could barely get an accurate count of the soldiers under his command.

The lack of effective administration left the troops critically short of supplies, and without training they had little ability to organize and fight a large battle. Facing them in Boston were King George's regulars from the best trained and most powerful army in the world at the time. A British attack would have crushed the American army and the Colonial cause with it.

Washington understood that, despite his soldiers' independent streak, they had to become a proficient, regimented army if they were to prevail over the professional British soldiers. He immediately established standards for military training and discipline, and enforced the rules through his own iron will.

In 1779, Americans commanded by Gen. "Mad" Anthony Wayne seized the supposedly impregnable British stronghold of Stony Point on the Hudson River in a daring night attack, using cold steel only, that shocked the British with its fury. When the 1st Maryland Regiment was almost overwhelmed at the battle of Guilford Courthouse in 1781, the highly trained and experienced Marylanders maneuvered expertly, leveled their bayonets and charged the elite British Guards regiment. Six months later, Washington and allied French troops surrounded Cornwallis' army at Yorktown in a classic European-style siege. When the British forces surrendered at Yorktown and offered their swords to the French officers, Gen. Jean Rochambeau pointed them to Washington as the battle's commander and victor.

The Army's history shows the professionalism of the American soldier continued to carry the day against formidable enemies. American troops fought the British to a standstill in the War of 1812. They defeated Santa Anna in the Mexican War and secured America's West. When armies of Americans opposed each other in the Civil War, Ulysses S. Grant and Robert E. Lee conducted campaigns so brilliant they are still studied around the world. American Doughboys broke the back of the kaiser's army in the First World War. Their sons lead the way in Europe and the Pacific as GIs in the Second World War, and another generation of soldiers stopped the advance of communism on the Korean Peninsula. In all of these, it was the skill of American soldiers, not our technology or overwhelming numbers, that secured our victories.

America's unconventional wars, such as in the Philippines and Vietnam, are even more telling. They show the Army can fight with skill, honor and dedication in even the most trying circumstances. The lessons from

Vietnam bore themselves out in the Army's swift victory in the Persian Gulf war.

George Washington would see the same professionalism and excellence that he instilled in 1775 in the soldiers of the 21st century. Today the U.S. Army shoulders the brunt of two difficult wars, maintains a forward presence in nations critical to U.S. interests around the world, and sustains peacekeeping missions largely out of the public eye, all with a volunteer force. Though our wars in the Middle East have provided some shocking images of U.S. soldiers, the Army itself uncovers and prosecutes its mistakes.

Army leaders continue to testify candidly to Congress in a perfect example of their ultimate responsibility to the nation and civilian control. Soldiers hold themselves accountable to their own high standards, fix their problems and continue fighting. Professionalism is evident in the Army's conduct during failures as well as successes.

It has been popular in the last few years to refer to the Americans who fought World War II as the nation's greatest generation, and the description has much validity. But on this Army birthday remember that every generation of American soldiers, from the militiamen at Cambridge in 1775 to the troops who patrol Baghdad and Kabul today, has faced the nation's most difficult tasks honorably and professionally. Remember that George Washington's standards have persisted as the Army's strength and perseverance.

Our current crisis against America's enemies will also persist, but it cannot outlast the spirit of the American soldier. We've been doing this for 230 years.

Michael Schellhammer is an intelligence specialist with the Defense Department and a lieutenant-colonel in the Army Reserve with service in the First Persian Gulf war, Haiti, Bosnia and Iraq. The opinions in this article are his own.

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CTF Devil conducts OP Omaha Beach

Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- Combined Task Force Devil conducted its first brigade sized combat operation since it became the operating headquarters of Regional Command East Afghanistan earlier this month.

Operation Omaha Beach, which involved approximately 800 troops, took place June 8 through 15 near the Paktika border region and almost 400 Afghan National Army soldiers and Afghan National Police forces.

During the operation 176 patrols were conducted, half of which were joint patrols with Afghan forces. The patrols netted almost 30 individuals associated and believed to be associated

with anti-Coalition activity in the region.

Numerous weapons caches were also captured consisting of approximately 1,500 mortar rounds, 340

crates of various calibers of ammunition, 400 107mm rockets, small arms, improvised explosive device materials, fuses, anti-Coalition documents and altered voter

registration cards.

The Soldiers and paratroopers involved in this operation made it a success," said 2nd Lt. Roger Vogel, the assistant fire support officer for CTF Devil. "The cooperation between Coalition Forces and the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police has set the enemy back."

The operation was a let Afghan forces flex their muscles in the remote region near the Pakistan border

"We saw increasingly bold actions of Afghan National Police in going after anti-Coalition forces," Vogel said.

CTF Devil continues to conduct operations in Regional Command east to kill or capture anti-Coalition militants in order to assist Afghan forces in providing a more secure and safe Afghanistan.



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

A Combined Task Force Devil Soldier scans his sector for enemy while on patrol. CTF Devil conducted its first brigade sized operation June 8 through 15 and was directed at anti-Coalition forces in Paktika.

Khowsht PRT helps orphanage construction

By Spc. Laura E. Griffin
Assistant Editor

CAMP CHAPMAN, Afghanistan - Afghanistan has been involved in constant conflict for the last 30 years or more; thousands of orphans are a side effect of this condition.

"There are probably over 900 orphans in the Khowsht Province alone," said Master Sgt. Elaine Horn, Khowsht Provincial Reconstruction Team noncommissioned officer in charge. "Their parents have died fighting against either the Russians or the Taliban regime or have died since then because of a condition like illness or disease or injuries."

To Horn, who is a police officer back in the United States, building an orphanage seemed like a step in the right direction toward saving these children from a life of poverty and from the hands of the Taliban.

"When the [Minister of Social Affairs] approached me for assistance in this area, I was really taken," said Horn. "I love children and I enjoy working with the kids. It's a goal that I really want to see accomplished."

The new orphanage will have two dormitories that will house approximately two to three hundred children, one for boys and one for girls, said Horn. This will give them a place to live, classrooms and teachers will

be provided, and a dining facility.

Usually when a child is orphaned in Afghanistan, it is up to the brother or the closest relative of the parent that died to take the child in. That is normally the case, but not always. Often, the orphaned children are raised by distant cousins.

"Unfortunately, the next closest relatives are not always found," said Maj. Carl R. Hollister, Khowsht PRT commander. "Communication can take a while here because street names are non-existent in the vast rural countryside, that's why we have so many orphans."

The Minister of Social Affairs is running the orphanage out of privately leased land for roughly 10,000 Afghani a month. To help alleviate this situation, the Khowsht Province governor set aside some government land to build the new orphanage on.

There are a couple of steps that need to be taken before the PRT will take on a new project.

The first thing they look for is sustainability, said Hollister. A project cannot just be started with PRT money without assurance of the local government's ability to sustain it after the PRT is gone.

"By them approving the program, they're saying that they have teachers, nurses, doctors and technicians who will work there and be paid a government salary," said Hollister.

Next, the village that wants the hospital or clinic or school has to sign that property over to the government. It is important the land on which the PRT starts a project is identified as belonging to the government because land disputes are a major hurdle that the PRT has had to learn to overcome.

"This wasn't happening in the past," explained Hollister. "The coalition would put a building up and after it's done, the actual owner of the land comes up and says, 'This is my land, thank you for building me a new house.'"

These steps not only save the PRT money and time, they also help add legitimacy to the new Afghan government by putting them in charge and encourages the people to get used to going through proper channels.

"For now, they think, 'Wow, that's such a long process; it takes forever to get approval through the provincial and national government,'" said Hollister. "Well, that's how the system works. We're not just going to give them a handout; the days of civil affairs and PRTs giving out handouts because it's a feel good, happy thing to do are over with. Now we need to start looking at long-term stability. That's the key to helping us get out of here eventually."

Construction began on the orphanage in April. It will take around four months to complete at a cost of about \$86,000.

ANA, U.S. Soldiers share common bond

By Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- Several years ago the Afghan National Army's training center opened near Kabul and recruits began their training that would eventually lead them to serve side by side with Coalition forces working to secure the country. Like the U.S. Army, a plethora of young men enlisted for reasons as different as the backgrounds that led them to serve.

However, some reasons for joining either the U.S. or Afghan armies come up more often than others, the desire to better oneself and the country being a common bond that most Soldiers regardless of background share.

June 5, like many days for Pfc. Josh Gaston, has the 22 years-old sweating in the back of a humvee and choking down the dust from the convoy ahead. The dust is nearly half way around the world from his hometown of Newark, N.J.

Gaston and other paratroopers from Company B, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, were heading to the village of Yaqubi to secure it while the Khowst provincial governor spoke to promote participation in September's parliamentary elections.

When the paratroopers arrived at the village approximately 15 kilometers north of the provincial capital of

Khowst, they were met by a contingent of Afghan soldiers from the 33rd Kandak. A kandak is roughly the Afghan equivalent of a U.S. Army battalion. One of the soldiers standing on guard with his AK-47 rifle in hand was Mohammed Adris, a 19 years-old specialist from Jalalabad.

Adris is outfitted with relatively simple equipment. His standard issue AK-47 assault rifle and five loaded magazines are well maintained despite showing signs of age. His woodland camouflage uniform, black boots and green beret are a sharp contrast to Gaston's desert camouflage uniform, breathable combat boots and Modified Improved Combat Helmet.

The AK-47, with its iron sights, looks naked in Adris's hands next to Gaston's M4 Carbine. The carbine has more accessories on it than a teen age girl on her first day of high school.

Attached to the compact assault rifle is a laser he uses with night vision goggles to target the enemy in complete darkness. He also has a close quarter's combat sight that makes aiming the rifle as easy as putting the illuminated red dot on the target and squeezing the trigger, and a flashlight mounted to the hand guard for the times his mission takes him into low light situations. Gaston's biggest addition is the M203 grenade launcher mounted just under the barrel of his rifle that allows him to accurately place explosives from a distance.

Even with the dark green uniform and beret, Adris still seems cooler under the afternoon sun as Gaston is loaded down with bullet-stopping body armor, water, first aid supplies, hundreds of rounds for his rifle and eight grenades.

Gaston joined the Army after a few years of college and working as an auctioneer at an automotive auction. With the prospect of a job in the law field, the Army was obviously not the most lucrative job option for Gaston. However, it was a family tradition that he felt proud to continue.

Gaston's father, a Green Beret during the war in Vietnam, mother and wife were all proud of his decision to enlist.

"My parents are very proud of me, my wife is too," said Gaston. "But, it is sometimes hard for them."

For Adris, the Afghan army was his most lucrative option after only graduating from the 4th grade and working as a shopkeeper before joining. He sends most of his \$75 a month pay back home to his 20 member family that includes his parents, six brothers and five sisters.

Both soldiers attended intense training far from home in order to earn the title of Soldier. Gaston spent 14 weeks at Fort Benning, Ga., while Adris journeyed to Kabul for 24 weeks of training.

"We were taught basic infantry stuff; urban combat, search tactics, detainee training and some air assault stuff," Gaston said.

Adris's training although longer was similar.

"Weapons training was my favorite part," Adris said.

Despite the hardships that come from being a soldier in either the U.S. or Afghan army, both said that they felt good about their mission.

"This is what I joined for, helping these people out and making the world a better place," Gaston said.

"I am a volunteer, I wanted to serve my country," said Adris. "My country needs to be built again and I am tired of fighting."

Adris also hopes that more Afghans would serve their country and that the nation's children go to school.

Both see the military as a career opportunity.

"Hopefully one day I will be a general," said Adris.

Gaston hopes to follow in his father's footsteps and take on the challenges of Ranger and Special Forces training.



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

Pfc. Josh Gaston, a Newark, N.J., native and paratrooper with Company B, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, maintains rear security June 5, while on patrol in the city of Khowst after an improvised explosive device detonated near an Afghan National Army patrol. The IED caused no casualties or damage to equipment

Wellness goes deep within the PRT life

Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Assistant Editor

MEHTARLAM PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM, Afghanistan - Imagine a life without running water. Bathing every four days and having to use bottled water to make food for about 250 people three times a day. Also, doing the laundry in a bucket is a significant upgrade from the puddles that used to suffice.

To mention the bathroom situation would surely break some rules of journalistic propriety.

For the Soldiers and Marines living at Mehtarlam Provincial Reconstruction Team in the Laghman Province, this doesn't take much of a stretch of the imagination. This has been their reality ever since the PRT came into existence in February.

But this is one reality that is about to change for the better.

"We started digging this well 15 days ago and will be finished in two to three days," said Haji Mohammad, a well drilling equipment technician from the Khowst Province who was contracted to dig the well for the PRT, May 27.

They would have been finished digging by now, but they hit two large rocks on their way down through the hard, boulder covered earth, he said.

"This well is going to be very important," said 1st Sgt. Vincent C. Santiago, Company K, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment. "It's definitely a

moral booster."

The PRT has quadrupled in size since Santiago first arrived in April.

"There were just three tents when I first got here," said Santiago. "Now, we've expanded the boarder, built a dining facility, laid in drainage pipes

and soon we'll have running water. We've also gained about 88 more personnel here and have put up many more tents."

Once the well is finished, there will be running water for latrines, cooking, laundry and showers.



Spc. Laura E. Griffin

Sardar Khan, a well drill operator from Khowst Province, cleans the mud from the end of the well drill bit before it is hoisted back up into the drill pipe May 27. Haji Mohammad, background, provides slack on the rope attached to the drill bit. This well will provide running water for the Mehtarlam Provincial Reconstruction Team which has been without water since the PRT was first started in February.

Amber waves of grain...

Pfc. Josh Gaston, Company B, 2nd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment, patrols through a field on the outskirts of the city of Khowst. Gaston and fellow paratroopers were on patrol after an improvised explosive device attack on a nearby Afghan Security Forces convoy.



Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke

TF Normandy troops survive IED

Sgt. Chuck D. Meseke
Editor

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SALERNO, Afghanistan- First Lt. Heath Phillips, Sgt. Tim Orso, Spc. Dustin Bowers, Spc. Ryan Oakes, Soldiers from Task Force Normandy of the Virginia National Guard, learned first hand how some of the safety features of an up-armored Humvee can save lives on the battlefield when an improvised explosive device detonated beneath their vehicle June 15, near the village of Basan.

The unit started the day with routine patrols through the area where they met with officials in a village to address any security concerns that could help with the gathering of intelligence on enemy activity in the area.

Once they completed their mission in Basan Phillips received a call over the radio directing his men to support local police who had found what they expected to be an IED. They were met by police who had already cordoned off the area from traffic.

After inspecting the item Phillips said that he identified it as the pressure plate of a land mine, but it looked as if the explosives had been removed. Not one to take safety lightly, he still called up for combat engineer support.

Engineers quickly responded and determined the device to be harmless, even picking it up to show the local police of why the pressure plate wouldn't work without explosives.

It all seemed like a routine day of work for the troops that were about two weeks away from redeployment after a year-long tour in Afghanistan. After the engineers and police left



Spc. Ryan Oakes

The damage done to an up-armored Humvee during an improvised explosive device attack on a Task Force Normandy, Virginia Army National Guard, convoy June 15, near the village of Basan. Thanks to safety equipment and the proper use of protective features of the vehicle, the three Soldiers inside were uninjured by the blast. The gunner received a minor wound to the face. The Soldiers of Task Force Normandy are expected to redeploy within the next few weeks.

Phillips and his men quickly followed.

"We weren't going very fast when we hit it," said Bowers. "We were maybe going 20 (miles-per-hour), still accelerating from where the mine was."

The explosion of the IED ripped off the front of the armored Humvee leaving twisted and shredded metal where the front axle and engine compartment once were. However, the passenger cab of the vehicle was intact, leaving those inside shaken, but unharmed.

Orso, who was standing in the gunner's hatch during the attack, was ejected from the vehicle. He sustained only minor wounds to the face, partially thanks to his issued ballistic eyewear that he was wearing.

Everyone in the group agreed that the reason they survived was the lessons they had learned first hand

about their safety gear when two of their comrades, Staff Sgt. Craig Cherry and Sgt. Bobby Beasley, were killed in an IED attack on another armored Humvee in August of 2004.

"During the first time, everyone was ejected from the vehicle," Phillips said.

"Now using the door locks and seatbelts is like a religious process," he added.

The Soldiers then explained how they really didn't understand the function of the door locking mechanisms in up-armored Humvees and thought they were just to keep outsiders from getting in to the passengers. Most of the troops also didn't wear seat belts because they didn't want to be slowed down by them if trying to exit the vehicle.

It wasn't until the first IED attack and some words of advice from Bowers' veteran father that they learned

the true value of the door lock system.

"My dad, who is an E-9 (sergeant major) in maintenance, told me about a class he took on the up-armored (Humvee) at Fort Bragg," said Bowers. "He told me how the locks strengthen the cab and keep you from getting ejected during a blast."

Another lesson learned from the first blast was to strap down any loose boxes of ammunition or other heavy equipment in the vehicle to keep it from injuring anyone inside, Phillips said.

Overall the group seemed satisfied and relieved that they all survived and that their safety equipment functioned properly.

"It worked, the stuff that was supposed to give, gave, and the stuff that was supposed to hold, held," Bowers said.

Agriculture workshop held in J-bad

By Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige
117th MPAD

JALALABAD, Afghanistan - U.S. Department of Agriculture District Director, Mike Hofberger is fighting the war on terror by planting the concept of co-operative farming into the minds of Afghan people. This concept supports strategic economic building. Once this capacity building system is established, it is self-sustaining and can yield positive economic growth.

More than 75 co-operative farms managers and members from the directorate from throughout the Nangarhar Province gathered in Jalalabad for an agricultural co-operative workshop. Independent farmers interested in hearing what a cooperative farm is also attended.

"This workshop was a first of its kind," said Hofberger, a U.S. Department of Agriculture Advisor to the Jalalabad Provincial Reconstruction Team.

"The vision driving cooperative farming is Afghan people helping themselves," said Hofberger, "With 85 percent of the population involved in agriculture, this would also lead to a better livelihood for Afghanistan in general."

Isamail Dowlatz, the Deputy Director of Agriculture for Nangarhar Province moderated the workshop. Dowlatz spoke in support of working with the Non-Governmental Organizations, the University, and U.S. Department of Agriculture to create more farm co-ops. He felt that this effort could revitalize farmlands devastated by 30 years of war, and more importantly revitalize agriculture infrastructure in the country.

The Deputy-Governor of Nangarhar, Asif's motivational speech encouraging farmers to work together, started out the workshop.

Also attending the workshop were several different Non-Governmental Organizations interested in working towards the goal of creating farm co-operatives in Nangarhar.

Randir, an NGO speaker representing Relief International, an organization working in Nangarhar and creating cooperatives, spoke positively saying, "What you cannot do alone, you can do together."

Randir presented ideas and key points for a successful farm cooperative. For instance, after getting interested farmers together, a properly trained manager and board of management is needed to start a co-op.

Co-op creating organizations provide this training and guidance in developing farm cooperatives.

Volunteer membership by farmers, is essential to getting a willing group in the co-op, while respecting the dignity of each farmer to make a free choice. Co-op also means co-operation within co-ops and with other farm co-op farms, ideas for success that worked, can be taught and shared for mutual good.

Buying a tractor is a concrete example. No single farmer would be able to afford a tractor, but 100 farmers together could buy a tractor and use it.

Government agencies and NGOs can help train people on farming techniques, improved farming methods, and provide better seed products. Funneling such training through co-operatives, would multiply the training's effectiveness and create trainers who would train other farmers.

Economics is a major obstacle preventing farm growth especially on farmers living from crop to crop.

Many independent farmers in Afghanistan are at the mercy of money lenders who charge a high interest. The lenders often demand paybacks in terms of illicit crops, they tell the farmers to grow. The high interest also eats away at the farmer's profits.

The idea of a co-op bank account stirred the audience's interest. Such an account could leverage better interest and get legitimate bank loans. Akin to bank loans, is a government started fund, to create low interest farm loans. The loan's pay-back,

enlarges the fund which is again lent to farmers. This practice can create a large cash reserve to help the co-op expand, buy equipment or as a life-preserver to keep the farmers afloat in hard times.

Afghan farms are small in comparison to farms throughout the world today. By creating agriculture co-operatives they would be able to use modern farming methods and become competitive with neighboring countries or in a world market.

The workshop ended on a high note. The final speakers were managers of Nangarhar co-operative farms. Their testimonies sparked a lively discussion of pros and cons.

A reoccurring theme with each speaker, whether they were from an existing cooperative, an NGO or government agency, was the idea that, a group of farmers can accomplish more than one farmer working alone.

Many managers left with notes in pocket, taking with them the ideas from speakers they had heard.

"If everyone here told just 10 others about what they heard today, we could reach 750 people," said Hofberger. One speaker boasted of a co-op with 1,000 members. If word got out to that co-op alone, then 2,000 ears would hear about this self-sustaining system that could wield an economic dagger, into the heart of terror.



Sgt. 1st Class Curtis Matsushige

Farmers and Co-op managers review their notes gathered from speakers at the workshop. Co-operative farms managers and members from the directorate from throughout the Nangarhar Province gathered in Jalalabad for an agricultural co-operative workshop. Independent farmers interested in hearing what a cooperative farm is also attended.

'Island Warriors' ready for battle

Cpl. Rich Mattingly

3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines

CAMP SCHOENER-KIRVEN, JALALABAD, Afghanistan - Third Battalion, 3rd Marines, America's Battalion, continued a relief in place at fever pitch with sister battalion, 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines here this week.

Marines and Sailors from 2/3 have been arriving in country steadily since last month, and the operational tempo has remained high, with most Marines being in country just a few days and in their Forward Operating Bases just hours before heading out on their first combat patrols with 3/3 Marines.

"We started working with the 2/3 guys as soon as they got here a few weeks ago, teaching them some of the things we've learned this deployment and getting them used to being here," said Lance Cpl. Josh Demlow, squad leader with Headquarters and Service Co., 3/3's guard force. "They're pretty motivated and ready to get started, which is making the transition smooth," he added.

The relief in place has been eased, said many Marines from both battalions, by the familiarity they have with each other and the way they both know how "Hawaii Marines" do business when forward deployed.

"It added a lot of familiarity to the process for us," said Master Sgt. Ron Rice, America's Battalion Operations Chief. "You have to make sure that both battalions are in agreement down to the platoon and squad level," added Maj. Gerald Graham, 3/3 Air Officer. "This is a unified effort," he said, "This isn't a matter of one Battalion replacing another, but of two units doing the most they can to insure that the Marine Corps maintains a unity of force here in this volatile area."

In fact, as the temperatures have risen from the harsh, freezing cold America's Battalion endured to the sweltering heat 2/3 will continue to experience for the bulk of their deployment, attacks on Government and Coalition Forces have increased in some parts of Afghanistan. The Marines said that not allowing Al Qaeda and Associated Movements even a second to relax or find shelter in areas where Marines have drastically improved security is their primary goal.

"We were able to get into a lot of areas where Coalition Forces have never been and make a positive impact there, both in the campaign to eradicate insurgency and in our efforts to promote the growth and stability of the Afghan Government," said 1st Lt. Ben Lubin, Fire Support Coordination Officer for 3/3. "2/3 will continue where we left off, adapting to changes in the battle space as they occur."

The Tactical Area of Responsibility that 2/3 inherits from America's Battalion is a safer and more secure place, said Lt. Col. Norm Cooling, 3/3 battalion commander.

"Our legacy is a significantly changed security environment in places that were once far more volatile. We killed or captured several insurgent leaders and convinced several others that it was in their best interests to reconcile with the democratically-elected government," said Cooling. "We seized human terrain by winning the support of village populations in those areas where Al Qaeda and Associated Movement insurgents operate and we helped significantly increase the proficiency of the Afghan National Army and Police by conducting joint operations."

The Marines' focus in Afghanistan is to make sure the process that began with the fall of the Taliban in 2001 is projected forward into a legitimate government that can stand on its own with a national army to maintain security and stability.

"It is important for the Government of Afghanistan to see that they are not starting from square one but will continue to move forward both in security and reconstruction," concluded Maj. Andrew Priddy, 3/3 Battalion Operations Officer. America's Battalion will return to their home station, Marine Corps Base Kaneohe Bay, Hawaii within the month.

FOB name honors fallen Marines

Cpl. Rich Mattingly

3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines

CAMP SCHOENER-KIRVEN, JALALABAD, Afghanistan - Third Battalion, 3rd Marines recently christened their new forward operating base at Jalalabad Airfield "Camp Schoener-Kirven" in honor of two America's Battalion Marines who were killed in action last month.

In keeping with long-standing traditions of honoring the heroic actions of Marines in combat, Lance Cpl. Nick Kirven and Cpl. Ricky Schoener, riflemen who gave their lives May 8, during fierce fighting in the Alishang Province, were remembered fondly as their names appeared on signs around the camp. The Marines and Sailors based here said they appreciate the

symbolism of the renaming.

"They deserve it, pure and simple," said Petty Officer William Hurley, Weapon's Co. hospital corpsman who served with both Schoener and Kirven. "It's the least we can do to pay tribute to them both."

Hurley's sentiments were echoed throughout the camp as Marines took time again to reflect on the pairs' sacrifice.

"Those guys were so passionate and caring and just great Marines. They gave everything they had here, and I think it's important that everyone who continues to come here and fight will be saying their names for a long, long time," said Lance Cpl. Justin McLachlan, rifleman with Weapons Co., 3/3.

America's Battalion rests assured the two Marines will be remembered not only in



Cpl. Rich Mattingly

A sentry stands watch at a gate into Camp Schoener-Kirven at Jalalabad Airfield. The camp was named by America's Battalion in honor of Lance Cpl. Nick Kirven and Cpl. Ricky Schoener who were killed in action last month.

name, but by what they were able to accomplish over the course of the seven months the Battalion worked to root out Al Qaeda and associated

movements throughout eastern Afghanistan.

"Those Marines gave their lives while fighting an insur-

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Zito starts charity for wounded troopers

By Rey Guzman
Army News Service

WASHINGTON - Oakland Athletics starting pitcher Barry Zito's strikeouts are counting toward more than just helping his team's chances of a postseason run. They now stand to help war-wounded troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, and their families.

Zito, 27, committed early during this year's Major League Baseball season to contribute \$100 per strikeout to help the wounded-warriors being treated at military hospitals such as Walter Reed Army Medical Center and Bethesda Naval Hospital. His program, "Strikeouts for Troops," will raise money to subsidize the travel and lodging expenses of their families visiting the hospitals, in an effort to bring the "comforts of home" to the injured service men and women.

"I think it was my dad (who first) kind of thought of a way for other guys to get involved," Zito said. "There wasn't really anything out there that was what we were looking for. He wanted to give a certain amount per strikeout to the troops that came back wounded and are recovering in the hospitals."

Zito, once a member of Oakland's now disbanded "Big Three" pitching rotation, which also included the Atlanta Braves' Tim Lincecum and St. Louis' Mark Mulder, said the urge to get involved also came from visiting wounded Soldiers receiving treatment at Walter Reed.

"The importance about it (Strikeouts for Troops) is it brings the comforts of home to these guys that are recovering," he said. "I went to visit a few guys at Walter Reed and it was cool to see how important it was to them to have their families around."

Zito said the monetary contributions collected from the "Strikeouts for Troops" program will be used for more than just the travel expenses of Soldiers' families visiting the

military hospitals. He said the funds will also go toward childcare costs for those families during their trips, and the fund's Web site says wounded troops will receive clothing, meals and entertainment while receiving treatment in the hospitals.

"A lot of guys said that having family around is the best medicine they could be administered," he said.

Since the inception of the "Strikeouts for Troops" program, Zito has recruited other MLB stars for his fundraising efforts. Zito's former teammate Hudson, Boston's Curt Schilling and Cleveland's C.C. Sabathia have also joined the ranks in support of the wounded troops. Zito said communication has been sent out to all 30 MLB teams through union representatives to recruit other players, both pitchers and hitters alike, to join forces for his cause.

"Baseball and America are kind of synonymous," Zito said. "I think it's important that we are doing this because it's the national pastime, and it's you know 'apple pie' and those grassroots things about this country. I think they're all a big part of what we enjoy on a daily basis, and I think more than anything people forget what these guys are doing out there."

Zito said his connection to military life comes through his paternal grandfather, a former five-star general in the Italian army. The A's ace-hurler, however, attributed his desire to start the "Strikeouts for Troops" program to his "pride" and patriotism.

"I think it's just a pride of what we have,"



Rey Guzman

Oakland Athletics pitcher Barry Zito visits Arlington National Cemetery and discusses his "Strikeouts for Troops" program with historian Thomas Sherlock and Col. Richard H. Breen Jr. of Army Public Affairs.

he said. "Baseball is such an integral part of America, and those guys fighting on the frontlines are the ones that are keeping America what it is, and the way it always has been. I think it's more about trying to pay (them) back."

Zito toured Fort Myer and Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., on June 8, while during a three-game inter-league series against the Washington Nationals. Zito had pitched the previous evening, but suffered a 2-1 loss due to a two-run home run off the bat of Washington's Nick Johnson. Zito struck out seven batters in that game, adding another \$700 to his contribution total.

Anyone interested in making a financial contribution to Zito's "Strikeouts for Troops" fund can do so by visiting the fund's Web site at www.strikeoutsfortroops.org.

"I think a lot of guys really appreciate what those guys are doing for us and I don't see anyone who wouldn't," Zito said. "I know that some people don't agree with the war, but it goes beyond that. It's about helping fellow Americans."

Eligibility for Combat Action Badge released

WASHINGTON (Army News Service) - The Army announced this week the eligibility requirements for its new Combat Action Badge.

The CAB, whose design features both a bayonet and grenade, may be awarded to any Soldier performing assigned duties in an area where hostile fire pay or imminent danger pay is authorized, who is personally present and actively engaging or being engaged by the enemy,

and performing satisfactorily in accordance with the prescribed rules of engagement, according to the specific eligibility requirements.

Award of the CAB is not limited by one's branch or military occupational specialty; however, to receive the CAB, a Soldier must not be assigned or attached to a unit that would qualify the Soldier for the CIB or CMB.

The CAB's creation was

approved by Army chief of staff Gen. Peter J. Schoomaker on May 2, 2005, to provide special recognition to Soldiers who personally engage or are engaged by the enemy.

"Warfare is still a human endeavor," Schoomaker said. "Our intent is to recognize Soldiers who demonstrate and live the Warrior Ethos."

"The Global War on Terrorism and its associated operations will be the first era of conflict consid-

ered for this award," said Lt. Col. Bill Johnson, Human Resources Command chief of military awards. "September 18, 2001, is the effective date for the new award. That is when President Bush signed Senate Joint Resolution 23, authorizing the use of military force against those responsible for the recent attacks launched against the United States."

The CAB should be available late this summer or early fall.

Up Front & Centered: 'To thine own self be true'

By Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter

Combined Task Force Devil PAO

The U.S. economy is looking stronger every day and that economic growth is creating a significant number of jobs as witnessed in the third quarter of 2004 and should continue through the first part of 2005 (Herman Trend Alert, Sept. 17, 2004).

This trend will stimulate Americans who are dissatisfied with their jobs into looking for new positions. This trend will also cause a larger number of U.S. government employees and military members to reconsider leaving their current duty position or leaving their Service all together for a more rewarding job.

Recent studies suggest that up to 40 percent of today's workers, including military personnel, have already checked-out. They are investing more of their attention to new job opportunities, rather than to performance improvement in their current positions.

These employees, who have psychologi-

cally resigned, but still report for work every day, are known as "warm chair attrition." A substantial number of them are expected to leave their jobs as soon as the economy improves.

We've all heard about a "short-timers" attitude. I guarantee you each of them have a perfectly good excuse why their employers, or in our case, the government "owes them". That helps them justify why they don't give 100% at work any more. Germans call this syndrome poor "arbitzmoral" we call it work ethic.

We all know several really good people at home that have been handed a "raw deal"

and because of that they have lost their focus at work. But who does this harm? Their boss? Their office comrades? Or themselves?

I put to you

that the one harmed the most by this behavior is the person who has lost their personal work ethic. Remember what Shakespeare said: "To thine own self be true."

Everyone is the captain of their own destiny. Everyone holding a position or job chose to accept the job. No one tricked

them. On the contrary they probably tricked their employers into believing they were the best person for that position.

So from a management point of view, how do you fix the "warm chair attrition" problem? You can take the easy route and just wait for dissatisfied employees to leave for greener pastures. Or you can become an employer who cares about putting the right people in the right jobs by appreciating employees as individuals, improving your communication with them, and showing them that you are genuinely interested in their professional development.

I guarantee you that the second choice is the harder one, but it's the choice that allows management to build a strong team that is true to itself.

"Everyone is the captain of their own destiny."

-Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter
Combined Task Force Devil
PAO

We want to hear from you

Are you an aspiring writer or photographer? We want to use your stories and photos in the Desert Devil Dispatch to highlight the great things the men and women of Regional Command-East are doing. For more information, e-mail Master Sgt. Geoffrey Carter at carterg@cjt76.centcom.mil.

Camp

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gent cell that has been terrorizing the people of northern Laghman Province for a long time," said America's Battalion's Commander, Lt. Col. Norm Cooling, continuing "Thanks to their sacrifice and the work of their fellow Marines, that cell has been all but destroyed. This helps bring peace and stability to Afghanistan, which, in turn, will keep this country from harboring the terrorists that attacked us on 11 September 2001."

After the hours-long battle during which Schoener and Kirven lost their lives, Afghan officials reported

that nearly two hundred insurgent fighters sought to contact Government of Afghanistan forces about reconciliation.

Camp Schoener-Kirven was built from the ground-up beginning less than two

"I want their legacy to be a peaceful and secure Laghman Province."

- Lt. Col. Norm Cooling,
Commander, 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marines

months ago. America's Battalion's area of operations in Afghanistan recently shifted to focus on areas where insurgent activity has been the most prevalent in recent months and Camp Schoener-Kirven became their headquarters.

While enemy activity increased in surrounding

provinces and insurgent-led civil unrest flared briefly in the city of Jalalabad, the camp was built in a field across the flight line from the Jalalabad Air Field's terminal with a handful of Marine combat engineers coordinating other Marines, civilian engineers and local national workers.

"When we got started here it was nothing but 10-foot mounds, bomb craters and pure sand," said 1st Lt. Tim Bove, Battalion Engineer Platoon Commander. "We had a couple of hundred Marines temporarily become engineers to help out."

Now, the camp that bears the name of two fallen warriors is fully operational as America's Battalion prepares

to transfer authority for the Marine Corps' combat operations in Afghanistan to 2nd Battalion, 3rd Marines this month.

Second Battalion's inheritance here will be one of improved security and a greatly weakened insurgency, said Cooling, a legacy that he hopes reflects the service and sacrifice of Schoener and Kirven.

"I want their legacy to be a peaceful and secure Laghman Province and an example that all Marines remember to follow," he said. "Our traditions of honor and valor, which all Marines strive to live up to, are set for us by those who have gone before us. We must take every opportunity to remember those who distinguished themselves in action...particularly those who made the ultimate sacrifice."